

Per California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 548.5, the following information will be posted to CalHR's Career Executive Assignment Action Proposals website for 30 calendar days when departments propose new CEA concepts or major revisions to existing CEA concepts. Presence of the department-submitted CEA Action Proposal information on CalHR's website does not indicate CalHR support for the proposal.

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Date

2021-08-12

2. Department

California Department of Social Services (CDSS)

3. Organizational Placement (Division/Branch/Office Name)

Office of Equity

4. CEA Position Title

Immigrant Youth Policy Coordinator, Office of Equity

5. Summary of proposed position description and how it relates to the program's mission or purpose.
(2-3 sentences)

This CEA position is required to develop policies to support the integration of immigrant youth in California and is necessary to assist the CDSS in making high level policy decisions across intersecting program areas, managing programs, and providing oversight of programs. This CEA will be the Department's Immigrant Youth Policy Coordinator and will report to the Director of the Office of Equity; they will provide leadership and develop policy related to the administration of post-release social services and wraparound support programs, filling a role that is new to the CDSS executive team.

6. Reports to: (*Class Title/Level*)

Director, Office of Equity - Exempt

7. Relationship with Department Director (*Select one*)

- ☐ Member of department's Executive Management Team, and has frequent contact with director on a wide range of department-wide issues.
- ☒ Not a member of department's Executive Management Team but has frequent contact with the Executive Management Team on policy issues.

(*Explain*):

The Immigrant Youth Policy Coordinator advises the Executive Management Team regularly on immigrant youth policy and statewide issues and is the primary point of contact for external stakeholders including other departments and federal agencies engaged in immigration and refugee resettlement issues.

8. Organizational Level (*Select one*)

- ☐ 1st ☒ 2nd ☐ 3rd ☐ 4th ☐ 5th (mega departments only - 17,001+ allocated positions)

B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST

9. What are the duties and responsibilities of the CEA position? Be specific and provide examples.

The Office of Equity (OOE) provides statewide support of initiatives to increase access and implement programs that foster accessibility, language services, racial equity, and immigrant integration. The OOE includes the Office of Tribal Affairs, Equal Employment and Opportunity Office, Civil Rights, Accessibility and Racial Equity Office, Office of the Foster Care Ombudsperson, and the Immigrant Integration Branch. The OOE funds and oversees immigration legal services, rapid response efforts for immigrant communities, and the refugee resettlement program while also fostering intradepartmental collaboration to support services for immigrant youth.

Initiatives to support the integration of immigrant youth include a growing number of programs such as the California Newcomer Education & Well-Being program, the Opportunities for Youth project, Refugee School Impact program, Unaccompanied Refugee Minor program, and the Youth Mentoring program. The CDSS is also preparing for the anticipated implementation of coordinated immigration support services for foster youth, an initiative which intersects across legal immigration, community care licensing, and child welfare policy areas. To perform the work necessary to meet the Department's obligations to implement and oversee these initiatives and programs, the OOE will establish the Office of Immigrant Youth which will be led by the Immigrant Youth Policy Coordinator, who will develop, coordinate, and oversee the implementation of state-wide policies and programs that are integrated across various policy areas including child welfare, licensing, wraparound social service and supports, refugee resettlement, and legal immigration services for immigrant youth in California.

Duties for this CEA include and are not limited to:

1. Oversees and directs the development and implementation of statewide policies for CDSS programs and provides guidance to Executive Staff on all state and federal matters pertaining to immigrant youth.
2. Coordinates with the CDSS Executive team, California Health and Human Services Agency, Governor's Office, and Legislative staff on legislative and policy issues.
3. Meets and confers with Department Executive staff, representatives from the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement, the California Legislature, representatives from local governmental agencies, philanthropic foundations, and community-based organizations on the most sensitive issues affecting youth integration.
4. Implements programs by establishing policies and procedures to facilitate the provision of social support programs for immigrant youth.
5. Develops policies to evaluate proposals, including the identification of eligibility requirements, resources needed to implement programs, acceptable performance outcomes, and technical assistance provided by the CDSS.
6. Responsible for the integrated analysis of legislative proposals.
7. Plans, organizes and directs the development, application, and uniform implementation of state legislative and regulatory changes for childcare and development programs.
8. Oversees the design and development of programs and identification of best practices. Coordinates programs in partnership with federal, state, and local organizations to facilitate comprehensive, efficient and culturally responsive services and programs.
9. Provides administrative oversight and direction to staff, including but not limited to adherence to all CDSS policies and procedures, mandatory training, and expectations.

B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST (continued)

10. How critical is the program's mission or purpose to the department's mission as a whole? Include a description of the degree to which the program is critical to the department's mission.

- ☒ Program is directly related to department's primary mission and is critical to achieving the department's goals.
- ☐ Program is indirectly related to department's primary mission.
- ☐ Program plays a supporting role in achieving department's mission (i.e., budget, personnel, other admin functions).

Description: The OOE is critical to the CDSS' mission to serve, aid, and protect needy and vulnerable children, families, and individuals. The California Governor's Office and the Legislature tasked the CDSS with leading the design and implementation of initiatives to identify best practices in supporting the integration of one of the most vulnerable populations in California, unaccompanied immigrant youth. These state programs are new to the landscape of immigrant integration initiatives and may inform policy and program considerations in California as well as other states. The CDSS must structure this work and develop policies and programs that cut across various areas including child welfare, community care licensing, wraparound social services and supports, and legal immigration services all of which require executive leadership and high-level coordination within the Department.

The addition of this CEA position will foster intradepartmental connection and coordination and will develop integrated policies that leverage knowledge and program content from multiple service areas, helping CDSS achieve its mission while also removing barriers and improving equity in policies and programs that support immigrant youth.

B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST (continued)

11. Describe what has changed that makes this request necessary. Explain how the change justifies the current request. Be specific and provide examples.

The CDSS has had to meet its mission amidst changing federal and State immigration policy and the Coronavirus pandemic which brought about many changes in program administration, service delivery, and the number of immigrants and refugees entering the country. The scope of the OOE has changed significantly as the California Legislature has approved various initiatives to support immigrant and refugee populations, resulting in the creation and expansion of various programs, an increase in complexity of projects, and the growth of the network of service providers and stakeholders. The OOE has been impacted by significant changes in its role in providing departmental and interdepartmental leadership on broader immigrant and refugee integration policies.

The state and our nation have experienced a growing number of unaccompanied immigrant youth entrants and CDSS needs to lead conversations and policy recommendations that intersect various systems including child welfare, licensing, immigration, education, and health care. This work requires that OOE expand its scope and structure and add a CEA position to design, develop, and administer the implementation of policies and programs that meet the integration needs of highly vulnerable immigrant youth population. The CEA will design new policies focused on culturally responsive in-language post-release assessments, referrals, and connection to mental health service models for immigrant youth. The CEA would also develop and enhance policies for specialized community navigation for linguistically isolated immigrant youth, including speakers of lower-incidence languages such as indigenous Mexican and Central American languages.

Starting in 2014, the United States experienced an increase in UC arrivals fleeing violence from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. To date, the State of California has received over 15,000 Unaccompanied Children (UCs) and continues to receive a high number of UC who are fleeing their countries of origin seeking safety, security, and reunification with family members already in the state. Although policies pertaining to the care and placement of UC fall under the jurisdiction of the federal government, there continues to be gaps in coordinated services to support their release to sponsors and participation in legal immigration proceedings. The annual number of UUM arrivals remained high over the years, with 11 to 14 percent of all UCs arriving in the United States being released to sponsors in California. For example, in fiscal year 2020, California received 8,422 UCs.

In addition, UCs face barriers to social and family integration, including language barriers and long-term separation from their receiving family. These populations need holistic services to ensure their needs are adequately supported after they are released from federal custody. Therefore, the California Legislature has proposed and implanted various law and policies to support this populations, such as:

1. Assembly Bill 47: require the CDSS to establish a grant program in coordination with one or more qualified non-profit social services agencies. It would provide multi-tiered and coordinated immigration support services in California to approximately 2,000 undocumented and mixed-status families who reside in the state and were separated by the federal government.
2. Assembly Bill 829: require the CDSS to contract with qualified nonprofit legal services organizations to provide legal services to unaccompanied, undocumented minors, as defined, who are transferred to the care and custody of the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement and who are present in this state. In addition, the bill would require that when the placing agency becomes aware that a dependent child or minor dependent is an undocumented immigrant, the placing agency will notify the dependent child's or minor dependent's attorney of that fact.

Furthermore, the CEA is needed to coordinate inter-departmental and stakeholder coordination to provide technical assistance to undoing harmful immigration policies that were implemented during the Trump administration.

This proposed CEA is necessary because CDSS needs a visible high level of leadership to support efforts to address highly sensitive and complex federal and state policy areas including immigration, child welfare, licensing, and other policy changes that impact State programs.

If this CEA position is not approved, CDSS will have inadequate leadership to ensure the effective development of integrated policies and oversight of programs and funding initiatives necessary to support legal services, outreach, post-release wraparound services, and other immigrant integration efforts impacting immigrant youth. Direct adverse impacts may include the particularly vulnerable population of newly arrived youth not receiving appropriate wraparound services. In turn, this can lead to further harm, impacting physical and emotional wellness, and the safety of immigrant youth. Consequences may lead to the need for or an increase in services in the future, including involvement with the child welfare services or justice systems.

C. ROLE IN POLICY INFLUENCE

12. Provide 3-5 specific examples of policy areas over which the CEA position will be the principle policy maker. Each example should cite a policy that would have an identifiable impact. Include a description of the statewide impact of the assigned program.

The individual appointed to this CEA position must develop, implement, and oversee statewide policies and initiatives for state and federally funded support services for immigrant youth. The CEA will develop and implement integrated policies with a high level of complexity and in coordination with Departmental stakeholders, advocates, service providers, federal administrators, and legislative staff.

Policy development and program implementation will expand among various intersecting policy areas including:

1. Administration for Children and Families, Office of Refugee Resettlement, Unaccompanied Children services
2. Administration for Children and Families, Office of Refugee Resettlement, Refugee Resettlement Program
3. State Legal Immigration Services programs
4. State Child Welfare programs
5. Community Care Licensing programs

Although refugee resettlement and child welfare program policies are well established, they are constantly evolving and must reflect the needs of, and intentionally serve, the immigrant youth population. The CEA position will bridge the OOE, Children and Families Services Division, and Community Care Licensing initiatives, coordinating and aligning child welfare and licensing policies to support best practices within the child welfare, licensing, legal immigration services, and refugee resettlement spaces. The CEA position will also engage other Departments such as the Department of Education to explore how to best develop programs that bridge both the education and social service systems.

The OOE also anticipates that the addition of this CEA position will alleviate the impact of the lack of integration and coordination in federal policy making; the federal government has not supported states in providing social safety net services to aide in the integration of all unaccompanied immigrant youth populations. The individual in this CEA position will engage and liaise with the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement and inform the development of federal programs that support the integration of unaccompanied immigrant youth in California.

Child welfare, education, and community care licensing policies also have a direct impact on immigrant youth and affect work and services delivered by the network of service providers who are responsible for reaching, engaging, and serving the immigrant youth populations served. The California Legislature continues to invest in initiatives to address the integration needs of immigrant youth and CDSS must be responsive in its increasing responsibility and allocate resources to develop and coordinate integrated policies and provide appropriate oversight of social support programs.

C. ROLE IN POLICY INFLUENCE (continued)

13. What is the CEA position's scope and nature of decision-making authority?

The Immigrant Youth Policy Coordinator will have the primary responsibility for developing integrated policies for social support service programs that support the integration of immigrant youth and that are overseen by the CDSS. The Immigrant Youth Policy Coordinator must ensure policies are developed in coordination with internal and external stakeholders including service providers and local, state, and federal governmental entities.

The Immigrant Youth Policy Coordinator will provide briefings to the Directorate on critical and sensitive issues regarding immigrant and refugee youth and will also have regular communication with representatives from the California Health and Human Services Agency, members of the Governor's Office and the California Legislature and their staff.

14. Will the CEA position be developing and implementing new policy, or interpreting and implementing existing policy? How?

This CEA position will develop new policies to support the growing number of initiatives that provide support services for immigrant youth. This CEA position will also interpret and implement existing Refugee Resettlement policies and programs specifically for refugee youth and oversee the implementation of culturally responsive refugee resettlement programs.